

2.1 Trade Across Continents

TECHTREK

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Main Idea European exploration of the Americas led to new trade routes among the world's continents.

Shortly after Columbus landed in the Caribbean in 1492, the Spanish began to make use of the region's rich resources. Their actions were the first steps toward global trade.

Farming for Profit

Spanish settlers in the Caribbean grew **cash crops**, or crops for profit. Land on the islands was well suited for growing certain raw materials that were in short supply in Europe. For example, sugarcane grew well on the islands, and could be sold in Europe where there was a **scarcity**, or shortage. Spanish settlers **exploited**, or took advantage of, the labor of the native people for the heavy work on their farms.

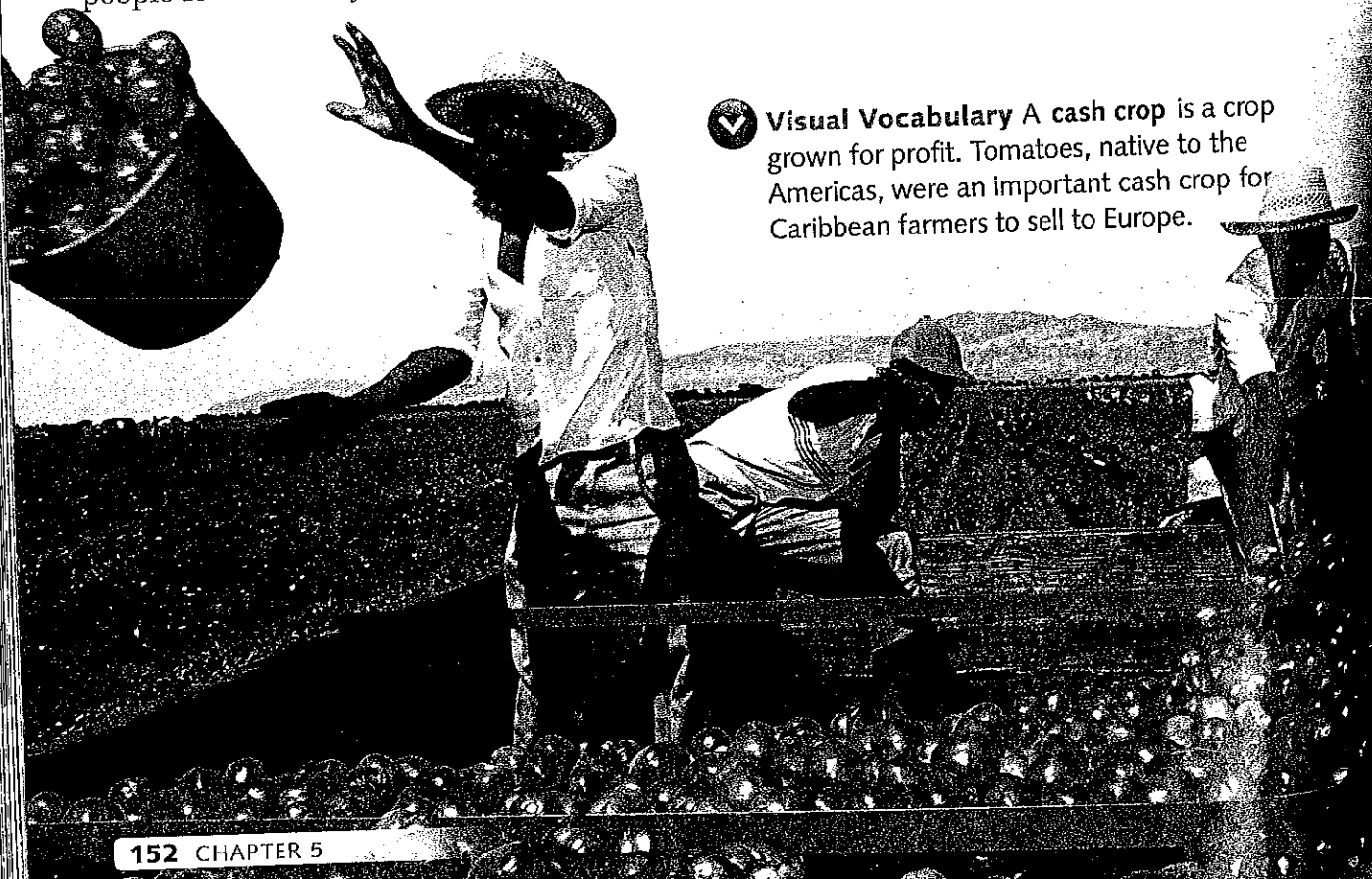
The native people were also weakened by sickness. They could not fight the diseases, like smallpox and malaria, that settlers brought with them from Europe. As large numbers of native people died from disease, Spanish settlers had to look elsewhere for the workers they needed to farm their cash crops. So, after minerals and raw materials arrived in Spain, manufactured goods went to Africa to pay for slaves, beginning more than 300 years of slavery in the Americas.

New Trade Changes the World

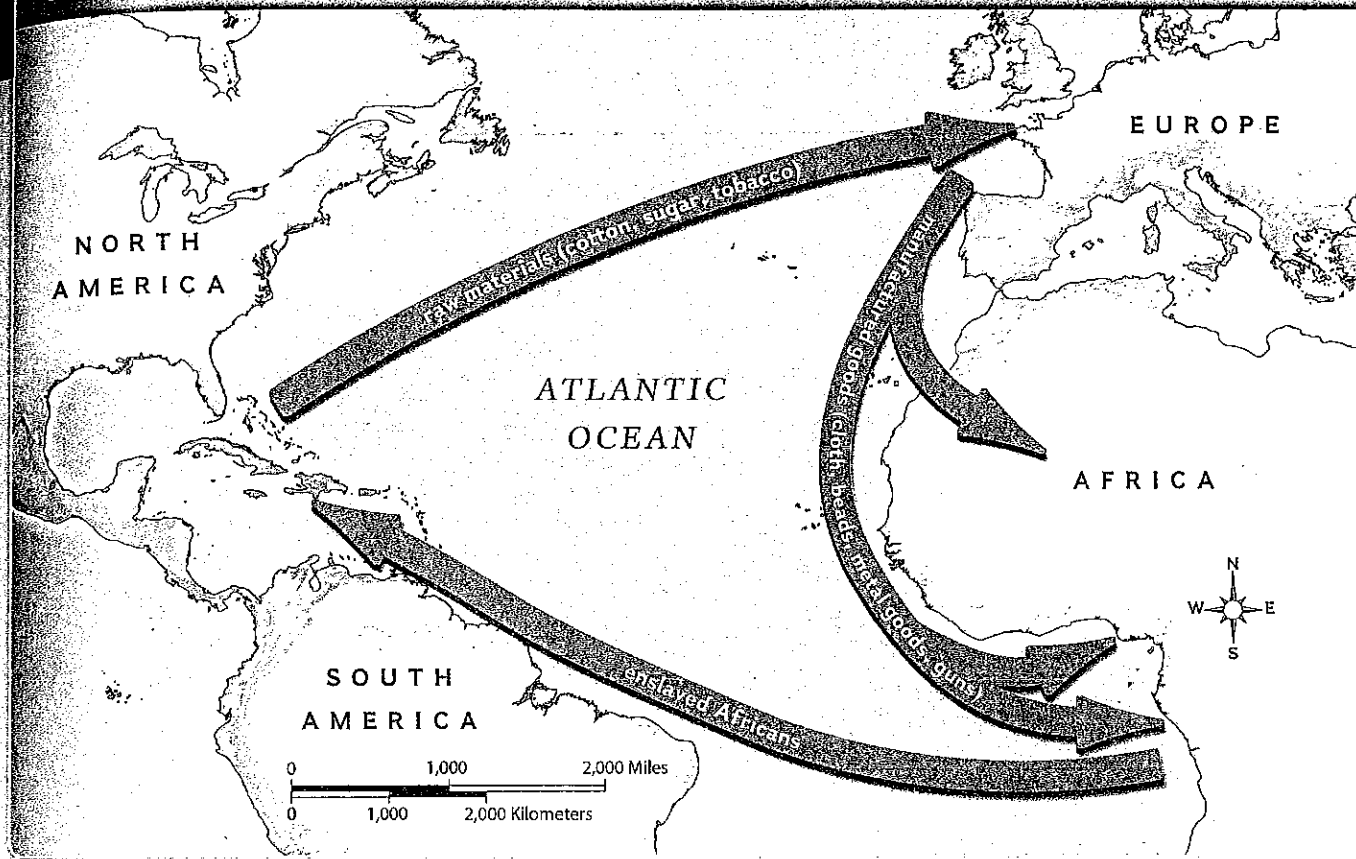
Beginning in the 1500s, goods were exchanged in what became known as **triangular trade**—trade among three continents: the Americas, Europe, and Africa. The new trade established economic patterns that continue today.



Visual Vocabulary A **cash crop** is a crop grown for profit. Tomatoes, native to the Americas, were an important cash crop for Caribbean farmers to sell to Europe.



TRIANGULAR TRADE



Triangular trade soon brought about competition among European countries for the resources of the region. Spain was gaining great wealth from its settlements in the Americas, causing other European countries to join the race for profit. Portugal, France, and Britain began competing with Spain for control over trade and colonization of the Americas.

Before You Move On

Monitor Comprehension In what ways did European exploration lead to new trade routes?

ONGOING ASSESSMENT

READING LAB

- 1. Summarize** What effects did triangular trade have on Europeans, native groups, and Africans?
- 2. Make Inferences** What role did native people play in the Caribbean economy?
- 3. Movement** Trace the pattern of the triangular trade from the Caribbean to Europe to Africa. Describe the pattern of the trade using directional words. Use the scale to estimate the distance from Africa to the Caribbean.